

LAS VEGAS POLICE DEPARTMENT	OPERATIONS
SUBJECT: <i>Canine</i>	NUMBER: OPR. 13
EFFECTIVE DATE: <i>9 September 2010</i>	REVIEW DATE:
AMENDS/SUPERSEDES:	APPROVED: <i>Chief of Police Gary Gold</i>
NMMLEPSC STANDARDS: OPR.01.08	NMSA:

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the efficient and effective management of the canine function by providing administrative guidance that identifies the responsibilities and processes within the uniform and other components of the department.

II. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Las Vegas Police Department to manage the canine function in an effective and efficient manner by coordinating the efforts of uniform and other organizational components as provided in this policy.

III. APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to all commissioned employees of the Las Vegas Police Department.

IV. REFERENCES:

A. NMMLEPSC OPR. 01.08

B. Las Vegas Police Department

V. DEFINITIONS:

A. **Alert:** A recognized signal from the canine that a handler must learn how to "read" for an alert.

B. **Annual Certification:** An annual evaluation to determine the satisfactory performance of canine teams in specific disciplines.

C. **Article Search/Scent Detection:** A canine that has satisfactorily completed all phases of a licensed training programs Article Search/ Scent Detection certification.

- D. **Call Off/Recall:** The ability of the handler to recall the canine before contact is made. The ability to call off the canine once contact has been established on a suspect.
- E. **Canine Handler Course:** The approved fundamental course of training that provides the curriculum for certification as a canine handler.
- F. **Canine Team:** The handler and canine will be considered as a team, and it is the team that will be certified. If the canine changes handlers, a new team exists, and the team will require certification.
- G. **Canine Training Academy:** Any law enforcement approved canine training curriculum.
- H. **Canine Quarterly In-Service Training:** A series or sequence of periodic “Quarterly In-service” canine handler training courses.
- I. **Narcotic Detection Canine:** A canine that has satisfactorily completed all phases of law enforcement approved narcotic detection certification program. The canine must be trained for the use in the detection of the odor of narcotics.
- J. **Patrol/Apprehension Canine:** A canine that has satisfactorily completed all phases of law enforcement approved canine patrol certification training course. The K-9 must be trained in surveillance, protection, containment, tracking, apprehension, and as a psychological deterrent.
- K. **Tracking Team:** A canine that has satisfactorily completed all phases of law enforcement approved canine tracking certification training course. The canine must be trained and is adept in trailing and locating human beings by scent. This type of canine is most often used to locate escapees, absconders, criminal suspects, and missing and/or abducted persons.
- L. **Dual Purpose Canine Team:** A canine certified in patrol (apprehension) and narcotics detection.
- M. **Master Trainer:** An individual that is certified by an approved instructor course. The master trainer will be responsible for training all Las Vegas Police Department canine handlers. The master trainer will be responsible for training starter canines for certification with canine handlers.
- N. **Positive Response:** When a canine displays in either a passive or aggressive manner, an alert toward the presence of a narcotic substance. A passive response is defined as a sitting or downing in the presence of a narcotic odor. An aggressive response is defined as a scratching behavior in the presence of a narcotic odor.

VI. PROCEDURE:

I. The Las Vegas Police Department's Canine program promotes a common cause by maintaining a canine program to aid in the prevention, deterrence, detection of criminal activity and apprehension of suspects.

The Las Vegas Police Department is committed to maintaining public safety and confidence through utilization of its canine program as an integral aspect of a multifaceted system developed and maintained to ensure the safety and security of communities are not compromised.

The Department strives to provide a safe environment for the public through the prevention of escapes, apprehension of fugitives, street patrols, and narcotics detection. The Department is committed to cooperative canine program efforts and mutual aid endeavors through planning with other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

This policy is intended to establish policies and procedures to be implemented as to utilization of the departments Canine (K-9) Unit. This implementation will provide for a canine unit, or K-9 Team to search buildings for criminals, to track wanted fugitives and to assist in search and rescue. The canine unit or team will assist in apprehension of criminals, and for the use of narcotics detection.

II. Administration of Canine Section

- A. Canine Team(s) are assigned to the Field Operations Division, and Narcotics Section. The teams will be allocated in a manner that is determined to be operationally effective and efficient and in the best interest of the citizens.**
- B. The canine officer is under direct supervision of the assigned Supervisor, Division Commander, and Chief of Police and/or designee.**
- C. A Canine Coordinator or trainer is designated by the Division Commander and is responsible for record keeping, training, and other duties which may be required for the efficient and effective operation of the canine team.**
- D. A supervisor or acting supervisor at a scene may assume command of the scene only. The final deployment of the K-9 will be the sole responsibility of the handler because he or she will have first knowledge of the K-9's limitations and abilities.**

III. Selection of Canine Officers

- A. Personnel who desire assignment to the canine section must meet the following requirements.**
 - 1. Minimum of two years as a certified police officer.**

2. No ongoing disciplinary actions pending.
3. Be in good physical condition.
4. Ability to prepare and maintain accurate daily canine records, forms, and reports.
5. Ability to be on an on call status, work odd hours, holidays, and weekends.
6. Must be able to provide proper motivation and control for the canine with adequate and effective verbal / physical characteristics.
7. To have a commitment to remain a canine handler of a working canine for the duration of the canine's life or retirement.
8. The final selection will be that of the Chief of Police or designee, and his commanders based of the applicant's scores of an oral board and/or written test.

B. The selection of a K-9 handler is an assignment and will not be considered a promotion.

C. Once assignments are made and certification is completed, the K-9 teams will be activated. Thereafter and only based on the handler's discretion to apply the K-9 to a specific operation will be that of the individual handler.

IV. Ownership and Disposition of K-9's

A. Police service dogs are owned by the City of Las Vegas.

V. Training Standards for Police Dogs

A. The K-9 coordinator is designated as the K-9 training officer and has the responsibility and authority to train the canine team according to his or her certified standards. The canine officer has the responsibility to adhere to the canine training officer's decision and instructions regarding the canine team training.

1. In-service training shall be scheduled and supervised by the canine training coordinator with a minimum of sixteen hours per month set aside for training. The in-service training shall consist of day and or night time training.
2. Each K-9 will be certified on a quarterly and yearly basis. The K-9 must pass all phases of the canine proficiency test, in narcotics detection, tracking, area searches, and apprehension. Once certification is acquired by the handler and the K-9, they will be subject to call out.

- a. If the K-9 team fails to pass a phase of testing, the K-9 is not permitted to be used in that phase until the team successfully passes the test.
- b. If the test is not successfully passed in certain time deemed feasible by a master trainer, the K-9 and handler shall be re-evaluated by the canine coordinator and master trainer for replacement and or retraining.

3. The handler, canine coordinator, and master trainer will maintain copies of the training records which pertain to the canine team.
4. All training will be conducted as required by certification standards.

B. The K-9 handler and coordinator are responsible for making sure that the teams are meeting all training certification standards. The team will be allowed to train on every Wednesday of the month. The handler must meet his training time within those days or must be able to justify a reason if the time is not met. The training days are subject to change based on operations.

VI. Retirement of K-9:

If for any reason, a K-9 is no longer able to function in the team, the K-9 will be retired. The Chief of Police decides the manner of retirement.

- A. A handler may be allowed to keep the K-9, if so desired, and if approved by the Chief of Police.
- B. Upon retirement, a waiver of liability for the department shall be signed by the K-9's new owner. The waiver of liability shall be kept with K-9's permanent file.
- C. The K-9's new owner shall be responsible for all costs associated with the care and keeping of the K-9. This includes, but is not limited to medical treatment, food, lodging, etc.

VII. Use of K-9 Teams

A. Reasonable searches of dwellings, buildings, jails, schools, etc. This will be at the discretion of the supervisor and handler. The handler will make the final decision whether to use or not to use the K-9. When a K-9 is deployed to conduct a search for the purpose of clearances of the structures for any criminals, who may have entered them. All exits should be guarded by officers from the outside and the officers should keep anyone from entering the structure until the K-9 and handler have conducted their search. The handler shall call out two warnings and will call out a final warning to the effect that a K-9 will be released to apprehend the suspect, if the suspect does not make him/her visible and peacefully surrenders.

Example of warning:

“This is the Las Vegas Police Department K-9 Unit make your presence known or I will release the dog, to find you. This is the Las Vegas Police Department K-9 Unit make your presence known or I will release the dog, to find you. This is the Las Vegas Police Department K-9 Unit make your presence known or I will release the dog, to find you, this is your final warning.”

1. A call out must also be used that fits the geographical language of the area.
- B. Cases where a felony suspect has fled on foot, the supervisor and handler will make the decision whether to use the K-9s tracking capabilities based on the circumstances to apprehend or find the suspect. The handler will make the final decision whether to use or not to use the K-9.
- C. The use of search and rescue in locating lost persons.
- D. Narcotic Detection
 1. Department canine are trained to detect various odors of narcotics.
 2. Any officer must notify the on duty supervisor and commander before requesting an off duty canine team to assist in locating narcotics.
 3. Narcotic searches shall be conducted on or off leash.
- E. Area Searches
 1. Area searches are done by allowing the K-9 to use its nose by tracking down or up wind. The handler may conduct the search on or off leash. The handler must have sight and must be able to control the K-9 at all times if it is off leash.
 2. Canine teams may be utilized to search an open area for felony suspects or in search and rescue at the discretion of the supervisor and handler.
 3. If possible the area search will be started from the last exact known position of the suspect, or the furthest position down wind.
- F. Tracking
 1. If a suspect flees the scene of any major crime, the immediate area should be sealed off by officers and the canine team will be called to track the suspect if practical. A second K-9 team may be called out if available and necessary to assist.
 2. Officers should take care not to disturb the start of a track and should try to keep the area sterile as possible to allow the canine to pick up the suspect's scent.

3. The above procedure applies to search and rescue.
4. Tracking is conducted on or off leash, but the handler must have sight and must be able to control the K-9 at all times if it is off leash.

VIII. Policies Regarding the Use of K-9 Teams

- A. Request for assistance by law enforcement agencies other than the Las Vegas Police Department shall be referred to the supervisor or canine handler. If the request is outside of San Miguel County the Commander of the canine team will determine if the department canine team will be deployed.
- B. The canine handler must be completely aware of the K-9's state of training abilities to be able to use the K-9 to the fullest and to avoid attempting to use the K-9 beyond its capabilities.
- C. When a canine is requested at a scene, the situation shall be fully explained by the officer making the request. The K-9 handler/supervisor shall be responsible for determining whether the circumstances justify the use of a canine and also for determining the tactical utilization.
- D. A request for an immediate tactical utilization of the services of a canine team may be made by any officer at the scene of an incident.
- E. A canine team may be called out at any time. The request for such must be approved and made by a supervisor.
- F. All K-9's shall be under full control at all times by the handler or supervisor.
- G. K-9s shall be secured for their safety and the safety of others when not accompanied by their handler.
- H. When the K-9 is left alone in a police vehicle, the vehicle will be secured in such a manner that a passerby cannot be bitten. The vehicle's windows will be left open three to four inches, rather than leaving the air conditioner of the vehicle on when possible.
- I. No one shall be permitted to tease or antagonize a canine or attempt to touch the K-9 without the K-9 handler's permission. All personnel will use extreme caution when around a K-9. All personnel will not make any gestures or aggressive movements towards a handler that could be interpreted as a threat to the handler.
- J. Canine teams shall attempt to avoid volatile situations, such as an area of lawful assembly, picket lines, student gatherings, civil disturbances, and riot situations, unless assigned by a supervisor.

IX. Public Places

- A. In cases where the K-9 must be used in a public place the handler will make every effort to control his/her K-9.**
- B. In all instances the K-9 will be kept on leash and may be muzzled in crowded public places at the discretion of the handler.**
- C. K-9 demonstration will be allowed in public places only when approved by the canine coordinator and only when the handler takes proper precautions. All equipment used for the demonstration must be inspected prior to the event so as to avoid any mishaps.**

X. Public Relations

- A. Departmental needs and manpower will be the first consideration when exhibits or demonstrations are requested.**
- B. All canine personnel assigned to public relations duties shall prepare themselves, their K-9 and equipment in such a manner as to present a professional appearance to their audience.**
- C. Personnel shall be in full duty uniform or appropriate attire deemed proper by a supervisor for the demonstration.**

XI. Reporting Procedure

- A. The canine handler submits a weekly report to the canine coordinator for record keeping for the following activities:**
 - 1. All building searches, narcotics searches, tracks, open area searches.**
 - 2. When assisting other agencies.**
 - 3. Any use of force ["Use of Force After Action Report" (U.F.A.A.R.)]**
 - 4. Demonstrations or exhibits.**
 - 5. In-service training.**
 - 6. Expenses.**
- B. A yearly report on canine recertification will be forwarded through the chain of command through the canine coordinator.**

C. The canine handler will submit a copy of the following records to the canine coordinator and on a weekly basis:

1. Training Files
 - a. K-9's narcotic training logs.
 - b. K-9s patrol training logs.
 - c. All training certificates.
 - d. All training evaluations.
2. All activity reports when K-9 is utilized for narcotic searches, tracking, and apprehension.
3. K-9 bite/injury report.

XII. Canine Bite Procedure

- A. If a department K-9 bites a suspect or anyone else, it is the responsibility of the handler to ensure the subject(s) receive medical attention as soon as possible. The handler will immediately report the bite to the supervisor. A photo will be taken of the injury as well as report will be documented any time a police canine bites a subject regardless of the injury.
- B. The suspect/victim shall not be transported to the emergency room in a canine unit. The subjects will be transported only by ambulance. If the subject is not under arrest the subject may be transported by a private vehicle, the handler must ensure that the victim receives medical care.

XIII. Care of Canine

- A. Each canine handler is responsible for the grooming, feeding, and medical care of an assigned k-9. K-9's are to be properly fed and groomed daily. Under no circumstances will anyone except a certified handler or decoy may feed or train a department canine or assigned canine.
- B. Canine shall not be used for stud service.
- C. Each canine handler provides a desirable home environment for the K-9.
- D. Each K-9 will be housed in an approved kennel specific for police service dogs.
- E. K-9's are not allowed to run at large at home. Necessary precautions shall be taken when visitors are at canine handlers home.

- F. Canine living quarters shall be kept clean and sanitary. The supervisor and/or canine coordinator shall inspect the canines living conditions routinely. The living quarters are also subject to inspection by other command staff.
- G. The department will furnish all food and veterinarians care for the K-9.
- H. Unauthorized persons will not be allowed to enter the canine kennel area. Although the canine handler may direct consent to another handler or certified decoy to enter the kennel area of the K-9.
- I. Each handler shall use the veterinarian specified by the department, or a licensed veterinarian in any emergency cases.
- J. Each K-9 will receive an annual vaccine for distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, para-influenza and rabies. The veterinarian will check each K-9 for internal parasites on a yearly basis.
- K. The canine handler is responsible for spraying the kennel for parasites routinely.
- L. Punishing the K-9 by striking or kicking the K-9 for no reason is strictly prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action.

XIV. Care and Use of Canine Vehicles

- A. The canine handler is assigned a department vehicle. This vehicle is to be used in accordance with existing policies regarding the use of police vehicles. The canine marked police vehicle will have identification markers such as "Caution K-9 Unit" to reduce the stress of the canine. This may not apply if the canine vehicle is being used in the narcotics section, this will be at the discretion of the handler.
- B. Uniformed canine handlers will wear identifying themselves as K-9 officers when they are on duty and operating a marked police canine vehicle. Narcotic canine officers will have the discretion to wear identifiers while on duty and when operating their vehicles. Once a narcotics canine officer is going to utilize a K-9 he/she must identify themselves as canine officers displaying their badge of office.
- C. Each canine handler is required to keep the canine vehicle in good operating condition.
- D. Vehicles shall be kept in a sanitary condition. Cleaning of the vehicle inside and out is the responsibility of the assigned officer, and is subject to routine inspection.

XV. Uniforms and Equipment

- A. Unless otherwise approved canine handlers will wear the authorized and appropriate uniform.**
- B. All handlers will be issued specialized equipment. An equipment list will be maintained by the canine handler's division commander, and canine coordinator. Each handler will be responsible for cleaning and maintaining of their assigned equipment. If the equipment becomes broken or lost the handler will be responsible for reporting the damage or loss to the canine coordinator as soon as possible.**
 - 1. Routine equipment inspections shall be conducted on a monthly basis and be documented by the K-9 Program Coordinator or his designee.**

VII. ATTACHMENTS:

NONE